

**INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE**  
**December 15 - 21, 2011**

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**1. [Senior Officials Welcome Troops Home From Iraq \(12-20-2011\)](#)**

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.  
American Forces Press Service

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md., Dec. 20, 2011 – President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter and Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, welcomed the final group of U.S. troops home from Iraq here today.

As the senior leaders looked on, Carter lauded Army Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, the last commander of U.S. Forces Iraq, and his troops for their performance of duty.

“Today is a historic day as we commemorate the return of the colors under which our armed forces fought so ably and proudly in Iraq and mark the end of the second longest war in U.S. history,” Carter said.

“Those of you who have arrived this morning bearing the flag of U.S. Forces Iraq represent all those who have served -- active duty, reserve, National Guard and civilians.”

Carter said the returning troops' performance and sacrifices have earned them their nation's gratitude.

“We, who greet you here at Joint Base Andrews, represent a grateful nation,” he said. “We welcome you. We’re proud of you. We’re in your debt. As the president has so eloquently said, ‘Your service belongs to the ages.’”

The deputy defense secretary acknowledged the thousands of service members who died or were wounded while serving in Iraq.

“To the families of the 4,500 troops who made the ultimate sacrifice, to the more than 30,000 troops that bear the wounds of this war and to their families, we lack the words to say what you feel on this day,” Carter said.

“Because try as we may, we can never fully know it,” he continued. “But we do know what your sacrifice means to us, to this nation, and to a world that still depends so much on America for its security.”

Carter praised U.S. forces for their flexibility in accomplishing the mission in Iraq.

“This was a war that asked American troops to be great warriors and also much more,” he said.

“Trainers, development experts, road builders, and ultimately, partners in helping the Iraqi people build a better and more hopeful future.”

The chairman also welcomed home the troops, noting they were just in time for the holidays.

“Today, we bring home the colors to United States’ soil,” Dempsey said. “At the same time, we embrace many of our own back into the fold, just in time for the holidays.”

“This is a time to reflect on a generational journey,” he continued, “a journey of over 20 years that took us through two wars with Iraq to a new beginning in our relationship with Iraq.”

American forces’ accomplishments in Iraq have provided the Iraqi people an “unprecedented opportunity to live in peace and prosperity inside Iraq, within the region, for their children,” Dempsey said.

“Because of the courage and resilience of our military and our partners -- those in our own government, throughout the world and in Iraq -- 30 million Iraqis are free today,” the chairman said.

“It’s a time to recall what we have achieved, what we learned and how we made a difference,” he added. “And it’s a time to remember those who served and those we lost. We all have our memories.”

The deputy defense secretary said the returning troops are beginning “a new chapter of their lives.”

“Some will go to college on the post-9/11 GI Bill. Many others will seek to enter or re-enter the workforce,” Carter said.

“Last week at Fort Bragg, the president underscored our commitment to help our veterans successfully make this transition home. As he said, ‘After years of rebuilding Iraq, we want to enlist our veterans in the work of rebuilding America.’”

Carter reaffirmed the Defense Department’s commitment to ensuring veterans and their families are taken care of.

“On behalf of Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, I want you to know that this department, in partnership with agencies across the federal government, will do everything in our power to make good on that promise,” he said.

“For nearly nine years, you answered America’s call,” Carter added. “It’s now America’s turn to answer yours.”

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## **2. Panetta Says Nuclear-Armed Iran 'Unacceptable' (12-20-2011)**

By Jim Garamone  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20, 2011 – A nuclear-armed Iran is “unacceptable” to the United States and no option to prevent that from happening is off the table, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta told CBS News.

Panetta told 60 Minutes reporter Scott Pelley that if Iranian leaders decided to go full bore on their nuclear program, then they could have nuclear weapons within a year. It could be quicker if the Iranians have a hidden facility enriching fuel, the secretary said during the Dec. 17 interview.

The secretary, speaking aboard his aircraft on the way back from a visit to the Middle East, Central Asia and Libya, pointed out that Israel and the United States share a common concern about Iran developing nukes.

“That’s a red line for us,” he said. “And it’s a red line, obviously, for the Israelis. If we have to do it, we will do it.”

If the Iranians proceed with the development of nuclear weapons, Panetta said, “Then we will take whatever steps are necessary to stop it.” This would include military options, the secretary said.

Inspectors from the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency are well-placed in Iran to observe nuclear activities, said Navy Capt. John Kirby, a Pentagon spokesman.

The secretary believes the U.N. inspectors would know if Iranian leaders make the decision to produce nuclear weapons.

“They have not done so yet,” Kirby said.

Biographies:  
[Leon E. Panetta](#)

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## **3. Clinton at Release of “To Walk the Earth in Safety” Report (12-19-2011)**

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at the Release of the Tenth Edition of *To Walk the Earth in Safety* Report, Washington, D.C.

MS. NULAND: Good morning, everybody. We are very pleased to welcome Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Hi. I see we have some special reporters here today. Welcome. We're so glad you're here. Maybe you can help your dad do his work here. (Laughter.)

Good morning, and I am pleased to be here this morning to release the 10th edition of *To Walk the Earth in Safety*, the United States Government's annual report on the **removal and destruction of unsecured conventional weapons**, and our success in **humanitarian demining**.

I'm joined today by Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs Andrew Shapiro, who you will hear from shortly. And I'd like to thank Andrew as well as Jim Lawrence and his team in the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement; and Dr. Ken Rutherford and everyone at the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at James Madison University who helped prepare this report.

Excess and unstable munitions, along with the countless number of landmines still buried around the world, pose a grave danger to the lives and safety of men, women, and children everywhere. In areas recovering from conflict, loose weapons increase the threat that groups or individuals might reignite hostilities. And around the world, landmines render thousands of acres of land unusable and literally tear away the fabric from communities unable to farm land, unable to walk safely from village to village.

But we are making important progress. Over the last decade, we have helped decrease the worldwide number of landmine casualties from around 15- to 20,000 annually to approximately 4,000 in each of the last two years. That is still an unacceptably high figure. But the progress we made is due in no small part to the commitment of the United States Government and partner organizations to clear hundreds of thousands of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle landmines.

This report documents the \$201 million in aid the United States provided in 2010 to help 49 countries clear explosive remnants of war and destroy excess stockpiles of weapons and munitions. And there are a lot of good news stories to tell coming out of this.

Central America, for example, became the first affected region to achieve mine-impact free status, meaning all explosives – and I underline all explosives – have been safely cleared from areas where people go about their daily lives. Community-based demining programs helped clear over 80,000 square meters of land in Afghanistan's Helmand Province. And the State Department's Quick Reaction Force helped the people of Papua New Guinea reclaim land for local use by clearing dangerous, unexploded munitions from World War II.

Further, in the 10 years since we began detailing our efforts in this report, the United States has helped destroy over 1.4 million small arms and light weapons; eliminate over 80,000 tons of unstable or excess munitions; and take more than 32,000 Man-Portable Air Defense Systems out of circulation. These so-called MANPADS are shoulder-fired missiles capable of taking down an aircraft, so keeping them out of the wrong hands is essential to protecting global aviation everywhere.

Our efforts to mitigate the threat from MANPADS and destroy conventional weapons have been in the headlines this year because they are of paramount concern in Libya. We have been working closely with the Libyan authorities since the early days of the conflict to inspect Libya's known storage sites and secure dangerous weapons and munitions. We are now working together to inventory these stockpiles and destroy arms that exceed Libya's national defense needs.

Now, clearing and destroying conventional weapons is only one part of our work to support civilians who live in dangerous areas with explosive remnants of war. We are raising awareness about the threat of unexploded ordnance so that, whenever possible, we can prevent injuries from occurring. And when they do occur, we strive to help survivors and their families rebuild their lives.

Our humanitarian action includes medical rehabilitation and vocational training for landmine survivors. Forty landmine victims in Bamyán Province, Afghanistan, half of whom were women, recently graduated from a program where they learned to tailor clothes and repair motorcycles. These kinds of assistance programs give landmine survivors new skills to help them provide for themselves and their families, and it also helps reintegrate them back into society.

In Bosnia, our support for the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance has helped survivors regain their mobility and dignity while helping restore confidence among the region's ethnic groups. For example, OKI Fantomi is a sitting volleyball club in Sarajevo made up of landmine survivors and amputees. They have become the world champions of their sport. And as the team competes in tournaments around the world, they remind us of how much the human spirit is capable of when faced with great challenges.

So the United States is proud to be the single largest financial supporter of humanitarian mine action around the world. We stand firmly with all those working to address the harmful and indiscriminate effects of landmines on civilians. And this report is heartening proof that when we work together in common cause, we can make real progress, but it's also a reminder of how much more we have to do.

Our next – one of our next great challenges will be helping countries secure and destroy their stockpiles of unstable conventional munitions stored in dangerous depots. Many of these stockpiles are left over from the Cold War. They're often poorly maintained, improperly stored, or inadequately guarded. Since 1995, explosions at more than 200 of these depots have claimed thousands of lives in every region of the world. And the frequency of such explosions is increasing as the stocks continue to degrade over time. So we are working with more than 30 countries on improving munitions maintenance and storage to help reduce the threat of these explosions.

Our efforts to secure and destroy conventional weapons combine elements of diplomacy, development, and defense – smart power at work. We work to make post-conflict areas safer and to better set the stage for their recovery and redevelopment. To achieve this, the State Department collaborates with a wide array of partners, from the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and USAID to dozens of public and private organizations. The NGO community is represented here, and I especially want to thank them for their efforts. And together, we have helped ensure millions of people can now walk safely across the earth; children can run freely without fear, and communities damaged by war can begin to heal.

And at this point, I'd like to turn it over to Assistant Secretary Shapiro. Thank you all.

[Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Andrew J. Shapiro](#)  
[On the Release of the Tenth Edition of the "To Walk the Earth in Safety" Report](#)

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#### **4. U.S. Official in Mideast for Sanctions, Terrorist-Financing Talks (12-19-2011)**

Washington — A top U.S. Treasury Department official is visiting Saudi Arabia and Bahrain for discussions of sanctions against Syria and Iran and efforts to disrupt funding for terrorist networks worldwide.

Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen is traveling December 17–20 to continue the Treasury Department’s close coordination with international partners and allies in the region, the Treasury Department said December 16. Cohen will meet with senior government officials in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and Manama, Bahrain, to discuss options to increase pressure on the government of Iran, including potential financial measures targeting the Central Bank of Iran.

Cohen’s meetings will also focus on other issues of common interest, including continued cooperation on efforts to disrupt support networks of terrorist organizations and the implementation of U.S., European Union and Arab League sanctions aimed at disrupting the ability of the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria to finance its campaign of violence against the Syrian people.

The United States and its partners have imposed a series of travel restrictions and economic sanctions on officials and entities in Iran — over Iran’s noncompliance with its international nuclear noncompliance obligations and human rights abuses following the 2009 presidential election — and on Syria for its brutal repression of peaceful protestors seeking government reform.

On December 1, Cohen told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the United States is pursuing a “broad-based pressure strategy” aimed at persuading Iran to change its course “and to make clear to Iran the consequences of its continued intransigent behavior.”

“Among the most important elements of this strategy are targeted financial measures designed to disrupt Iran’s illicit activity and to protect the international financial system from Iran’s abuse,” Cohen said. “We have focused our efforts on exposing Iranian entities’ illicit and deceptive activities, an approach that has garnered support among foreign governments and led them to take similar actions, enhancing substantially the impact of our actions.”

The [latest sanctions on Iran](#) were announced by the Treasury Department on December 13. Sanctions were imposed against Hassan Firouzabadi, chairman of Iran’s Joint Chiefs of Staff and Iran’s most senior military officer, and Abdollah Araqi, the deputy commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Ground Force. They are accused of rights violations during a crackdown on protesters and the mistreatment of detainees after Iran’s disputed June 12, 2009, presidential election, which came as Iranians sought to peacefully express their civil and political rights as part of the Green Movement.

In Syria, the United States, the European Union and like-minded nations have implemented strong sanctions to increase pressure on the Assad regime and target those responsible for grave human rights abuses. In both the United States and the EU, these include a ban on the import and sale of oil from Syria, the principal source of hard currency for that regime.

The Treasury Department’s Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence works worldwide to deter those who would donate money to violent extremist groups, disrupt the mechanisms through which they transmit money, and degrade their financial support networks.

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## **5. Secretary Panetta's Media Round Table in Turkey (12-18-2011)**

U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs),  
December 17, 2011

Roundtable with Secretary Panetta in Turkey

SECRETARY LEON PANETTA: Let me begin with some brief comments and then we'll open it up to questions.

First I'd like to extend my very best wishes to Prime Minister Erdogan for a continued recovery from his recent surgery and extend the regards of the U.S. government, the American people and best wishes to him for a quick recovery.

I'm truly delighted to be here in Turkey. Turkey is a key NATO ally and a very critical security partner for the United States.

This is -- this is my first visit to the country as secretary of defense, but as many of you know, I've had the opportunity to visit here in my previous capacities. And every time I've had the opportunity to be here, I've always felt that we were working with a very close partner and ally on whatever issues that I was dealing with at the time.

I've been able to engage in this trip in a very comprehensive set of discussions with Turkish leaders, including President Gul, Minister of Defense Yilmaz and the chief of national defense, just came from a meeting with the CHOD.

We've reaffirmed the importance of the U.S.-Turkish alliance in confronting some of the most pressing security challenges in the region and across the world, including supporting the democratic changes that are sweeping this region, confronting the oppressive Assad regime and encouraging change there as well and in equipping and modernizing the NATO alliance in order to deal with emerging threats.

I'd like to once again commend Turkey for its cooperation in hosting the NATO missile defense radar and for its significant contributions to ISAF in Afghanistan. I had the opportunity to be in Afghanistan, in Kabul. And actually, the Turkish troops are located there in the capital of Afghanistan, doing a great job in providing security at the capital. And we really thank Turkey for their participation in the ISAF effort in Afghanistan. My belief, as I mentioned, having just been to Afghanistan, is that the war effort there has reached an important turning point. And Turkey has been a leading force in helping to drive this success.

Just as Turkey has shared in our determination to deny al-Qaida and its militant allies safe haven in Afghanistan, I'd also like to express the strong solidarity of the United States with Turkey in the fight against the terrorist PKK.

In my discussions here in Ankara, I made very clear that the United States will continue to assist Turkey in confronting this threat. We talked about the efforts that we've made to confront terrorism, the successes we've had. And I indicated the solidarity we have with Turkey in confronting the terrorists that they have here in this country as well.

And speaking of that, I also mentioned to them that, having just come from Iraq and the ceremonies that brought that war to an end, that I assured them that we would have a long-term relationship with Iraq and that we would continue to work with Iraq to make sure that that country takes steps to deal with the PKK on that side of the border as well.

I also made clear that in this time of sweeping change in the region, it's important for Turkey to have strong relationships with those who share an interest in regional security and stability, including Israel. I believe that it is in Turkey's interest and in Israel's interest for the two to move forward to repair their leadership in order to deal with the many difficult issues that we confront in this region.

Earlier today, as many of you know, I had the honor of laying a wreath at the tomb of Ataturk, which I've had the opportunity to visit as well on previous trips to Turkey.

The modern and vibrant democracy that Turkey has become I think is a testament to the vision and to the strength of the Turkish people. This country has a very important role to play as a leader in this region and in the world, and Turkish people should know that they have a committed friend and a committed ally in the United States.

Thank you.

STAFF: The secretary will now take questions. The Associated Press.

Q: Mr. Secretary –Lita Baldor with the Associated Press. You're going to be traveling to Libya tomorrow. I was wondering if I could ask you what your assessment is of the situation there, particularly considering so far their inability to coalesce the militias and particularly the recent violence and -- (off mic) -- assassination attempts against the --[off mic] -- army can you tell us, are there concerns that they haven't been able to really take hold of -- (off mic)?

SEC. PANETTA: Well, obviously, the purpose of my trip to Libya is to have an opportunity of looking at that situation up close, but to also pay tribute to the Libyan people for what they did in bringing Gadhafi down and trying to establish a democratic government for the future.

Obviously, I'll have a better chance to get a sense of what progress and what difficulties they're confronting. But kind of standing back, it seems to me that they are working through some very difficult issues to try to bring that country together.

It's not going to be easy. This is not -- this is not -- this is not a country that has a tradition of democratic institutions and representative government. This is going -- this is going to take some work.

But the indications I have are that they are making progress, trying to bring tribes together, trying to bring the country together in order to establish the institutions that must be put in place so that the Libyan people will have the opportunity to have elections, to have representative government, to have institution of democracy put in place. That certainly is their goal. That's our goal. And working with them, I think it's the goal of other countries in the international community in working with them as well.

So, yes, -- there are going to be challenges here. There are going to be difficulties. But I think any country like Libya that was able to do what they did and show the courage that they did in making



the changes that took place there, I'm confident that ultimately they're going to be able to succeed in putting a democracy together in Libya.

STAFF (?): (Off mic.)

Q: (Inaudible) -- you already mentioned Israel, how much of a complicated factor -- (inaudible)? And if I may add to that, you were recently quoted in the Turkish media extensively saying that a strike against Iran -- whatever -- would not be very helpful at this stage. Do you still stand by that?

SEC. PANETTA: First -- first, with regards to the relationship between Turkey and Israel, I think -- I think it's important for both countries to try to do what they can to establish that, that relationship is -- they've had a strong relationship in the past, and I think it's helped both countries in dealing with the issues in this region. And at a time when there are great changes going on, at a time when there are great challenges, I think it behooves both countries to try to re-establish that relationship. I urge both to do that, and I'm confident that both Israel and Turkey recognize the importance of, hopefully, re-establishing those relations.

I think that, you know, it's important to recognize what the consequences would be of any country's military action. As the secretary of defense, I have a responsibility, if the president directs me, to take military action, but I also have a responsibility to point out the consequences of what military action involves. That doesn't represent a weakness I think that represents a strength.

Q: Mr. Panetta, Turkey wants armed drones. The Pentagon has supported that, but the Congress has some skepticism about members of Congress. Did you discuss this issue with Turkish officials today? And what's your message to Congress about the sale of armed drones to Turkey?

SEC. PANETTA: You know, we are in discussions with Turkey.

As you know, we do provide some technology to assist them in their efforts against the PKK. And we're prepared to discuss further efforts to try to improve the technology and those capabilities. And as always, obviously, in whatever discussions we have, we try to also share that information with Congress, so that they understand why it's important to take those steps.

So the answer to your question is that we continue to explore other steps that can be taken to assist Turkey in the effort to deal with the PKK.

MR. : Mr. Secretary -- (off mic).

Q: Mr. Secretary, there has been quite differences with regard to a push to Iran, between Turkey and United States in the past. And recently, we've seen some convergence of the -- (off mic) -- when we saw the report from Iran threatening Turkey because the Turkish government decided to hold the part of the radar installation in the eastern part of the country. Not only that, but also with regard to position that this government should -- on Syria, coming very hard on the Syrian government and pushing for the change, and the Iranians weren't happy with that. And how is your assessment of the current -- (off mic) -- of the United States government, Turkish government, with regard to Iran issues, including the Iraq, Syria, and nuclear arms program -- Iran's program?

SEC. PANETTA: I -- as I indicated to the leaders that I met with, I have tremendous respect for the leadership of Turkey on these issues.

I think they've exercised very responsible leadership in dealing with the issues that are taking place in the Middle East and in dealing with issues related to Iran and to -- and to Syria as well as other areas. And for that reason, I think it is important for the United States and Turkey to continue to work together in a cooperative relationship in order to deal with these issues.

We're in a period of tremendous change going out -- going on throughout obviously the Middle East, and we've seen a number of changes. I think Turkey and the United States share the goal that hopefully, these changes can produce positive results in the future for the people and the nations that have gone through this turmoil.

This is -- I think this represents a time of tremendous opportunity to be able to move that region forward in terms of the rights of people and the opportunities for people in that region, and I think Turkey recognizes that opportunity.

Iran -- I think we have urged Iran to join the family of nations, not to isolate itself from the rest of the world. And I think Turkey agrees that we should do everything possible to urge Iran to be a member of the family of nations as opposed to trying to undermine the progress that is -- that is being made in this region.

STAFF: Next question.

Q: Sir, what concrete measures, if any, did U.S.-Turkish leadership agree to in terms of ending the Assad regime?

SEC. PANETTA: We didn't -- we did not talk about specific steps other than to indicate that it's important that we continue to bring pressure on the Assad regime so that Assad steps down and the people of Syria are given the opportunity to be able to establish the institutions of government that will give them greater rights and opportunities.

We've seen what happened -- what's happened elsewhere, and I believe that, you know, at some point it's going to happen in Syria as well. But in order for that to happen, I think it's important not only for Turkey and the United States but the international community to continue to bring pressure on Syria, on the Assad regime to do the right thing.

And Turkey has exercised great leadership in making clear what steps should be taken, and we've encouraged that, and we will continue to work with Turkey and the international community to try to get Assad to do the right thing.

Q: Mr. Secretary, I would like to ask a follow-up -- (inaudible) -- Turkey is -- hearing -- the Russians ... to press Iranians, -- (inaudible) with regard to forward-base trainers --- (inaudible) -- next year -- (inaudible) -- includes -- (inaudible).

SEC. PANETTA: Yeah. No, I -- Turkey is a longtime member of NATO.

And Turkey, I believe, has been a very effective partner in NATO, in all of the missions that have been involved with NATO.

And the purpose of this defense system is to protect the NATO countries from attack. That's the main mission here. That's the main purpose here. And I think Turkey recognizes that it is important for this country to be a part of that defense shield. And you know, there are going to be countries that may or may not object to those steps that are being taken. But these steps are being

taken in defense of NATO. And it is for that reason that I think they're taking the right steps, and it's for that reason that I think that ultimately, other countries, whether they like it or don't like it, are going to have to ultimately accept it.

STAFF: Next question. Washington Post

Q: Mr. Secretary, you referenced earlier that the U.S. recently began flying Predator drones out of Incirlik. First of all, does the U.S. have permission from the Iraqi government to fly them over Iraqi airspace?

SEC. PANETTA: Yes.

Q: And part B is the little broader question. The U.S. military has also acknowledged that recently it's been flying drones -- (inaudible) -- surveillance missions, the Seychelles -- (inaudible) -- and these are places that the United States is not at war. Is this the way of the future for operations -- (inaudible)?

SEC. PANETTA: Well, I'm not going to discuss the operations that we're conducting with regards to a number of areas around the world that deal with the defense of the United States.

I think it's fair to say that, you know, it's -- these are technologies that are extremely important in developing the kind of intelligence and information that we need in order to be able to defend the security of our country. It also, I think, is extremely helpful in terms of our -- of our abilities to defend ourselves against those that have tried to ultimately attack the United States.

So, it -- bottom line here is that these are important technologies. They are important assets. They're extremely important to our ability to defend the country. And we're going to go continue to use them in the defense of United States security.

STAFF: (Off mic.)

Q: (Off mic) -- Mr. Secretary -- (inaudible) withdrawing from Iraq, what were your feelings? There's the nature of the debate going on what the United States has gained or lost, Which side did the U.S. gain or lose -- (inaudible).

SEC. PANETTA: When you -- when you participate in a historic ceremony that marks the end of a war, that kind of ceremony has a huge impact in terms of making you think about what's involved in war, of what wars are about and the price that's paid in war, and what are the gains and what are the losses as a result of that. So it makes you think about all of those things.

In this case, there's no question that, you know, the United States was divided going into that war, but I think the United States is united coming out of that war. We all recognize the tremendous price that has been paid in lives and blood. And yet, I think we also recognize that those lives were not lost in vain; that the end result of that has been to establish a sovereign and independent Iraq that can govern and secure itself; and that it's moving forward with establishing the kind of democratic government that I think will be an important stabilizing factor in that region of the world.

So, as difficult as it was, as difficult as the price was that was involved here, not only in the lives of Americans but in the lives of Iraqis, I think the price has been worth it, to establish a stable

government in a very important region of the world, that hopefully can begin to enjoy the freedoms, liberties and opportunities that all people ought to be able to enjoy.

STAFF: New York Times, have a follow-up?

Q: Are you optimistic that Iraq will stay -- (inaudible)?

SEC. PANETTA: I -- you know, I am optimistic. I think that my sense is that they are very loyal to their country. They want -- they want a sovereign Iraq. They want a strong Iraq.

Obviously, you know, there -- like any democracy, there are differences. There will be challenges. They will have tough issues they have to confront. And there will be those that will try to divide them. There are -- there are going to be those that will try to influence divisions within Iraq, both outside and inside Iraq. But I think the people of Iraq and the leadership of Iraq is committed to a strong and sovereign and independent Iraq. And I think, for that reason, I'm confident that they're going to be able to succeed.

Q: (inaudible) -- When you look at the narrative arc travels from yesterday, tomorrow, Iraq was a major commissioning, very expensive, very costly. Libya -- (off mic) -- America -- (off mic) -- been able to be honest -- to put American troops on the ground. When you look at these lessons, Mr. Secretary how will they influence your strategic study, and the way you shape the budget for next year --(inaudible) --Thank you.

SEC. PANETTA: I think, as I mentioned at the ceremony yesterday, that one of the important things for the experienced leadership -- for the experienced military leadership that has come out of these wars, both in Iraq and Afghanistan, is the importance of learning the lessons of war. And as we go through the process of having to achieve savings in the -- in the defense budget and reduce that budget by almost 450 billion (dollars) over the next 10 years, I think it's an opportunity for us to shape a defense system for the future based on learning the lessons of the past.

There's no question that, you know, we are a country that will continue to have force projection in the world. We will have that force projection in the Pacific. We'll have it in the Middle East. We will continue to maintain a presence in other parts of the world as well. But the bottom line is that we are going to be smaller force that's going to have to be more agile, more flexible and more capable in dealing with threats in the world. That requires -- that requires not only that we develop the strongest and the best technology, but it also requires that we develop the strongest and best partnerships wherever we can in the world.

So I think those are the lessons we're going to have to bring to bear as we shape the defense of the future.

STAFF: We have time for a few more questions.

Q: Mr. Secretary, how much influence can the U.S. have over the process that's unfolding in Libya now? And do you anticipate any assistance that you can give to that process in the near term, or are we essentially waiting for events to unfold?

SEC. PANETTA: I think -- I think it has to unfold a little bit. I think they have to determine what are -- you know, what are their needs, what steps do they need to take. You know, the last thing you want to do is to try to impose something on a country that has just gone through what the Libyans have gone through. They have earned the right to try to determine their future. They have

earned the right to try to work their way through the issues that they're going to have to confront. And as they do that, obviously, you know, we're prepared, if they want us to provide whatever assistance that they ask us to do. I know the NATO countries have indicated the same willingness to do that.

But this is an issue for the Libyans to decide and work through. And we will do whatever we can to encourage them to move in the right direction.

STAFF: And finally.

Q: Secretary Panetta -- (off mic) this has to go on Jennifer's question on Syria. Russia has offered a new draft resolution at the U.N. singling out the Syrian government for greater criticism than it has in the past. How do you see this latest news that U.N., -- the international community and the United States particularly -- do vis-a-vis Syria at the U.N. who have been reluctant with Russia and China?

SEC. PANETTA: Well, I think -- I think it was an important step for Russia to indicate that they were willing to work with an effort in the United Nations that would bring greater pressure on Syria. There's a lot to be worked through. I think the secretary of state will engage with Russia to indicate how best to bring them into that effort and to develop something that the United States and the international community can support.

But I think it's clear from the steps that Russia took that more and more, the international community is coming together as one to say to Syria and to the Assad regime that we can no longer tolerate the kind of killings that have gone on, the kind of abuse of human rights that have gone on in Syria, and that Assad needs to step down, and the Syrian people need to be able to move forward to establish the institutions of government that will protect their rights.

The best thing going right now is the unity of the international community in delivering that message. Not only is it happening in the United Nations, but it's also happening with the Arab nations as well in the Arab League. That kind of unified effort, that kind of unified pressure, I think, is ultimately going to pay off.

STAFF: Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

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## **6. Press Conference by Panetta, Prime Minister Al-Keeb in Libya (12-18-2011)**

U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)  
News Transcript, December 17, 2011

Press Conference with Secretary Panetta and Prime Minister Al-Keeb in Tripoli, Libya

PRIME MINISTER ABDUL RAHEEM AL-KEEB: (Translated.) In the name of God, welcome to all of you. I would like to welcome Mr. Secretary of Defense -- United States secretary of defense. He is well known for understanding our area. I would also like to salute his desire on behalf of the United States of America and to participate in [inaudible] people [inaudible] courageous and heroic efforts to build Libya.

At first we had a very friendly meeting, and he had mentioned that United States of America respects the ability of the Libyan people to lead the following phase; however, he had also

mentioned that the United States of America will stand by these people, and he did say this brave and courageous people to help him build his future without interfering with the ambitions and plans of this people to protect its future and to build it.

So on behalf of the Libyan people, on behalf of the brave and courageous, heroic Libyan people, I would like to thank the United States through the minister – secretary of defense. This interaction – we look forward to this interaction which will result in a cooperation for the better future of Libya. Thank you.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LEON PANETTA: Thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister, for [inaudible] service and for your commitment to the Libyan people during this very important time of transition and hope.

I've been told that I am the first United States secretary of defense to visit Libya, and this is truly a special honor for me to be in Tripoli today. I've come to pay tribute to the courage and determination of the Libyan people. They bravely came together, they rose up against an oppressive regime, they fought, and many died to chart a better future for themselves and for their children.

I'm particularly proud of the role that the United States played through the NATO alliance in helping protect and support the Libyan people during this dramatic and inspiring revolution. This was a very unique alliance against tyranny and for freedom.

Even though Operation Unified Protector has ended, I want to stress that the United States, despite the fact that that program has ended, will continue – will continue to stand by the Libyan people. To that end, we are looking forward to building a close partnership with the Libyan government, and we stand ready to provide whatever assistance they need in the spirit -- in the spirit of friendship and in the spirit of mutual respect.

Just yesterday the United States rolled back most of the sanctions it had imposed on the government of Libya, and has released all government and central bank funds within the United States' jurisdiction. This measure will allow the Libyan government to access most of its worldwide holdings and assist the prime minister in his efforts to oversee the country's reconstruction and transition.

In my conversation with the prime minister and with the minister of defense, I made clear that the United States stands ready to offer security assistance and whatever cooperation we can once the government identifies its needs.

I believe that this new and free Libya can become an important security partner for the United States. Libya is now in the hands of the Libyan people. They will chart their future. They will determine what assistance they require from the United States and the international community.

To the people of Libya, let me say this. The blood that you have spilled has earned you the right to determine your future, to work through the security issues that you are going to confront. And there is no doubt that you will confront some serious and difficult challenges bringing together all of the revolutionary forces that fought from west to east, securing weapons stockpiles, confronting terrorism, professionalizing the army and the police, and developing the institutions of a free and representative government. This will be a long and difficult transition, but I have every confidence that you will succeed in realizing the dream of a government of, by, and for all people and achieve a more secure and prosperous future.



The history of my country is the history of revolution and the fight for equal justice and for human rights. Now we share the same legacy, and we are and will be your friend and your partner.

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for hosting me here today. Thank you for – really a thank you to the entire Libyan people for being a source of inspiration and hope for this entire region and for the world. The torch of freedom that has passed throughout the centuries, and now passes from nation to nation in the Middle East and North Africa, burns brightly here in Libya. May it light your way to a future of peace, prosperity, and freedom.

MODERATOR: First question. Thom Shanker from the New York Times.

Q: Thank you very much. One of the most [inaudible] challenges facing the new government is bringing all of the militias under control. Mr. Secretary [inaudible] in Iraq and Afghanistan where the American military has both fought militias and worked with militias, is there any specific assistance that you can or will offer the Libyans [inaudible] bring all of the militias under control by yourself or will you seek assistance from the U.S. or other outside partners [inaudible]. Thank you very much.

SEC. PANETTA: That was, obviously, one of the issues that we discussed and clearly one of the challenges is the effort to bring together all of the revolutionary forces that were involved here in Libya. In talking with the defense minister and the prime minister, I am confident that they are taking the right steps to reach out to all of these groups and bring them together so that they will be part of one Libya and be part of one defense system.

There are a lot of young people that worked hard in this revolution, and I think that the goal of the prime minister is to try to embrace that energy and try to direct it in a way that can help and be productive for Libya.

I have a good sense that they understand the challenge that they're facing, but I also have a very good sense that they know how to deal with it.

PRIME MINISTER AL-KEEB: (Translated.) Yes, the secretary has given a very good answer for your question, but if I may complement his answer by saying that we know how serious this issue is. We realize that it's not a matter of just simply saying, okay, put down your arms and go back to work or whatever you want to do. We realize that there are lots of things that we [inaudible] finalize and be able to [inaudible]. We have programs – solid programs that try [inaudible] we [inaudible] former freedom fighters back to – they will be fighters for a better future of Libya, and we will give them opportunities that we [inaudible] matter of fine tuning some issues here for this program. So I am very optimistic. We know that these are not simple issues to deal with, but [audible] that we will take care of them over time.

Just a side note, as you well know, the Libyan people did not [inaudible] simply demonstrating peacefully, but the mentality – group mentality [inaudible], but [inaudible] here, made them act [inaudible]. The Libyan people are known to be peaceful and to work [inaudible] peaceful life and I am sure they will go back to that [inaudible]. So I'm very optimistic.

Q: (Translated.) [Inaudible] of cooperation for the future of Libya, especially with regards to lifting the embargo, or unfreezing Libyan assets?

SEC. PANETTA: As I stated, the United States has taken steps to lift sanctions on Libyan assets and hopefully those will be made available as soon as possible to the Libyan government and the Libyan people. This was something that the United States always felt from the beginning, the reason that those funds were held was because we did not want to have the Gadhafi regime have access to those funds. Those funds belonged to the Libyan people and now they have [inaudible] released back to the Libyan people.

MODERATOR: Next question is from Craig Whitlock with the Washington Post.

Q: [Inaudible] Mr. Secretary. As you know, there's still a lot of turmoil in the Arab world: Syria and Yemen are in conflict, Egypt's transition has been volatile and violent. To what degree do you think the unfolding of the transition here in Libya will influence these popular uprisings elsewhere? Or do you see Libya as a special case, a unique case as the secretary mentioned, whose lessons may not necessarily apply to other countries in the region?

PRIME MINISTER AL-KEEB : (Translated.) The fire of wanting to have freedom was burning here – [inaudible] revolution followed by the Egyptian one [inaudible] so and if you look at the commonalities amongst the three of them, including also the one in Yemen, you will see that there is a [inaudible] and freedom and respect for human rights and freedom of speech that does not exist in many Arab places, so I am almost certain that the Syrian revolution has been influenced in a positive way by the three revolutions in Tunisia [inaudible]. So I think this is one [inaudible] of why democracy in the Middle East is something that everybody needs to support and I think that our [inaudible], we have in the past played in a small way before this past – [inaudible] in a small way positive. [Inaudible] we want to do that. We want to show the good face of Libya. And I think this will also show [inaudible] quest for [inaudible].

SEC. PANETTA: I think it's pretty clear that this region is going through the most dramatic changes since the fall of the Ottoman Empire and we are seeing, in what has been termed the Arab Spring, changes that are taking place throughout this region. I think at the heart of each of these changes there is a commonality in the sense that it is the people in each of these countries that are seeking the benefits of freedom, human rights, and equal opportunity and justice. And that is at the heart of what we've seen take place, whether it's Tunisia or Egypt or here in Libya or the Syrians and elsewhere.

It is truly the sovereignty of the people – we talk about sovereignty of nations, but this is the sovereignty of the people that is taking hold in this region. It is going to involve different approaches in each of these countries, and different challenges in each of these countries. None of this is going to be easy and nobody ever said that it was going to be easy as each of these countries tries to confront the challenge of the developing institutions of government, developing the institutions of representative democracy. And there's going to be turmoil as they go through that process, as we've seen.

But I think ultimately, at the heart of this is the effort to try to make sure that each of these countries in their own way respond to what the people want and try to develop those opportunities and freedoms that are so important.

I don't think you can simply apply a rubber stamp here to each of these countries. They're going – each of these countries has to do this on their own. That's [inaudible] true in Egypt, it's true in Tunisia, and it's true here in Libya. The Libyan people and Libyan leaders are the ones that will determine the future of Libya. But we'll be there to provide whatever help they need. We'll be

there to provide whatever assistance they need. But in the end it is Libya and the Libyan people that will decide the future [inaudible].

MODERATOR: Last question.

Q: [Inaudible] – you had mentioned that the United States and Libya [inaudible]. Can you be more specific? Are we speaking of providing – selling arms to the Libyan government or can you be more specific about the kind of cooperation between Libya and the United States?

SEC. PANETTA: What I indicated to the minister of defense and what I indicated to the prime minister is that the United States is prepared to provide whatever assistance that Libya believes it needs. We discussed no specific assistance at this time. I believe that both the prime minister and the defense minister, obviously, as they may proceed in the days in the future here that they will assess what their needs are, and they will determine what kind of help we and, for that matter, the international community can help provide. But at this stage there certainly was no discussion involving arms or military equipment.

What we indicated is that they have to determine what their needs are, what kind of assistance is required, and whatever they need the United States will be happy to respond.

MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you everybody. This concludes our press conference [inaudible].

[Treasury Fact Sheet on Lifting Sanctions on Government of Libya](#) (12-19-2011)

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## **7. Burns' Speech on U.S.-India Partnership in Asia-Pacific Century (12-16-2011)**

U.S. Department of State  
Remarks by William J. Burns, Deputy Secretary, Pune, India

### ***U.S.-India Partnership in an Asia-Pacific Century***

#### **I. Introduction**

Thank you for that kind introduction. It is truly an honor to be here with all of you. With its half-million strong student body, its proud history and its cutting-edge research – the University of Pune, like India itself, is a place of irrepressible energy and limitless promise.

I can think of no better place to address the enormously important issue of U.S.-Indian partnership, and in particular the question of what the rise of the Asia-Pacific region – emerging more and more as the center of gravity in global affairs – means for the partnership between our two great nations.

Let me start with a simple premise. As President Obama told India's parliament one year ago: "the United States not only supports India as a rising power; we fervently support it, and we have worked to help make it a reality."

Indeed, we are counting on India's rise as a global power – one that engages from the Middle East and East Asia to Africa and beyond. The Obama Administration has high hopes for the U.S.-India relationship, and we are working hard to ensure that our ambitions are matched by results. Today, I want to address what I hope will become a defining dimension of the U.S.-India partnership: our

work together to support the emergence of an Asia-Pacific region defined by security, prosperity and human dignity for all its people.

As you graduate and begin careers across India and perhaps across the world, the Asia-Pacific region is emerging as the epicenter of economic growth, innovation and global trade. You will inherit a world shaped and led by this region. You therefore have an immense stake, nationally and personally, in how it develops in the coming years.

So the question is not whether the United States and India have an interest in working together in the Asia-Pacific. The question is whether we are doing as much as we can to ensure that our partnership in Asia realizes its full promise. I believe the honest answer is: not yet. The truth is that calls for U.S.-India cooperation in the Asia-Pacific have not always been especially well-defined, or at least not always matched by clear prescriptions for what this means in practice. The rhetoric tends to outpace the reality. We can and should do better.

So I want to use my remarks today to try to clarify the contours of the challenge ahead: to explain why American foreign policy, like India's, will increasingly focus on the Asia-Pacific; to dispel a few misconceptions; and finally, to talk about how our two nations can and must work together to help ensure security, prosperity and human dignity for this dynamic region, whose eastern and western rims we occupy.

## **II. The Rise of the Asia-Pacific**

So let us start with why the Asia-Pacific is so important.

Stretching from India to the western coast of the Americas, this region is home to half the world's population. It has witnessed unprecedented levels of economic growth, leading to reductions in poverty without parallel in human history. But the Asia-Pacific is also home to military buildups, nuclear proliferation, piracy, trafficking, natural disasters, and serious environmental and ecological challenges. Simply put, there is no more dynamic part of the world today, and no region more consequential in the decades ahead to American interests, to the shape of the global system, and if I may say so, to India's own future.

As the United States renews and reinforces our longtime role as a Pacific power, I know that some will question America's staying power. But they should remember that generations of Americans have sacrificed – alongside their partners across the ocean – so that democracy and prosperity could take root in the Asia-Pacific region. We remain as committed as ever to advance these objectives. The United States has always been a Pacific nation, and we have strengthened and reaffirmed our Pacific alliances. As President Obama told the Australian parliament one month ago: "I have made a deliberate and strategic decision – as a Pacific nation, the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future, by upholding core principles and in close partnership with our allies and friends."

Many of India's strategic thinkers feel the same way on the magnetic pull of an Asia-Pacific century. India's distinguished former Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, has observed that India's engagements with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China, Japan and Australia are "a reflection of the concept of the Asia-Pacific, which hitherto excluded India, expanding westwards to encompass the subcontinent as its integral part."

### III. A Peaceful and Secure Asia-Pacific

As we consider what a U.S.-India partnership in this region should look like, we should assess first where our interests most converge: our undeniable shared interest in a peaceful and secure Asia-Pacific – defined by rules, norms and patterns of behavior that favor openness –to ensure the peaceful, long-term prosperity that is so vital to our nations’ growth.

Secretary Clinton posed two questions in Chennai this past July: Will this region adopt basic rules of the road – or of the sea, for that matter –to mobilize strategic and economic cooperation and manage disagreements? And will it build the regional architecture of institutions and arrangements to promote openness, trade, rule of law, human rights, and accountable governance?

While each of us approaches this partnership with our own set of near-term expectations, our shared interests give us a strong incentive to make sure that resilient norms are developing that reflect our shared values and interests, and that the regional architecture in the Asia-Pacific is delivering results.

That’s why, last year, our two countries launched a strategic dialogue on the Asia-Pacific to ensure that the world’s two largest democracies pursue strategies that reinforce one another. We both have much to learn from each other, and dialogue offers an opportunity to identify new areas of cooperation and to address areas of disagreement. We are also launching a new U.S.-India-Japan trilateral consultation on regional issues. We understand the importance and effectiveness of multilateral approaches to regional and global issues, and appreciate India’s growing participation and leadership role in these efforts. We hope that India will join us in working to strengthen key Asian regional institutions – from the East Asia Summit to ASEAN.

One issue of crucial economic and strategic importance is maritime security. Like the United States, India has an enduring interest in freedom of navigation, the free flow of commerce, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. The oceans are key to India’s security and prosperity, as they are to ours. While India is nearly a continent unto itself, it still trades like an island. By volume, 90% of the goods it trades are carried by sea. We welcome and support India’s growing naval capacity and modernization and its engagement across Asia. India’s strong presence across the Indian and Pacific Oceans is a source of comfort and affirms its potential as a net security provider in the maritime domain.

Toward this end, the United States is interested in working with India as we develop our own approach to the variety of opportunities and challenges in the Indian Ocean region. As we explore future maritime security cooperation, we can build on what we have already begun to do together to improve our efforts to counter piracy, improve maritime domain awareness and offer assistance and disaster relief.

Already in the Western Indian Ocean region, New Delhi is demonstrating its growing maritime capabilities with a robust counter-piracy approach that serves common regional interests. As a founding member of the international Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, India has shown great leadership in the efforts to confront and roll back piracy that emanates from Somalia and threatens trade flows to and from Asia. The United States commends Indian efforts that have included naval ship deployments to the Gulf of Aden, escorting ships through unsafe waters, and stopping numerous pirate attacks. We recognize that Indian efforts have come at a cost borne by Indian sailors still held by pirates. And we sympathize with their families and communities.



As the United States expands its role in countering piracy, whether in the Gulf of Aden or the Straits of Malacca, we will look for increased opportunities to partner with India, alongside our traditional Allies, new and emerging partners, and with ASEAN. We also look to India to exchange anti-piracy lessons learned and work together with the international community to help build the judicial capacity in littoral states to disrupt and prosecute those financing piracy.

Some may reach the mistaken conclusion that this U.S. focus on Asia is part of a policy to contain China – it is not. That is neither our purpose nor our intention. In fact, we strongly believe that a thriving China is good for China, good for the United States, and good for India. The 21st century Asia-Pacific we seek is one in which India, the United States, China and all the states of this region and beyond enjoy good relations. Rather than seeking to divide Asia, we have consistently pursued policies that aim to unite and connect the region. This is true strategically but also economically, which brings me to the next area of cooperation I wish to discuss.

#### **IV. An Asia-Pacific Agenda for Shared Prosperity**

Today, the United States is elevating economic statecraft within our foreign policy. This is a turbulent time for the global economy as the Euro Zone seeks to resolve a crisis that will have economic implications for all of us. We are recognizing that many twenty-first century challenges unfold at the nexus of global economics and international diplomacy and are shifting our focus accordingly, including by increasing attention to the international implications of energy security challenges as well as the impact of science, technology and the environment on our economic policy making. The economic needs of the American people are also absolutely central to our own diplomacy around the world, and we are working to find new markets for American products and exports.

And nowhere is that more important than in the Asia-Pacific region we share. The region already generates more than half of global output and nearly half of global trade. But more than that – the choices made in the emerging economies of Asia will shape the global economy’s operating system for many years to come. And countries like India and the United States – with our belief in innovation and open societies—should have a strong interest in working together to ensure that economic competition remains open, free, transparent and fair. History shows – and we strongly believe – that an economically open system where countries can rise on their merits is one that will empower not just India’s businessmen and women and America’s – but Vietnam’s, Indonesia’s and China’s as well.

We welcome robust Indian economic engagement with the states of East and Southeast Asia – growing linkages that both our countries hope will serve as a ladder for economic growth. As my friend, Ambassador and former Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao once said, “Southeast Asia begins in Northeast India.”

The Northeastern Indian state of Manipur is closer in distance to Hanoi than it is to Mumbai, and recent progress in India’s commercial relationship with Bangladesh offers the tantalizing prospect of transforming India’s traditionally isolated northeast into a land bridge that connects the subcontinent to the vibrant economies of Southeast Asia. South India, meanwhile, is undergoing a manufacturing renaissance that is reviving its historic ties to Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia and fueling the growth of trade and investment in both directions. And these days, Pune-based companies are exporting everything from advanced robotics to John Deere tractors and frozen food to the Asian marketplace.



In the past few years, India has concluded Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements with South Korea and Japan. The CEPA with Japan is expected to double India-Japan trade by 2014. India is also deepening economic ties with Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia. Bilateral trade with China, of course is surging: China is now India's largest trading partner in goods (although we remain your largest partner for goods and services), and India's cumulative trade in goods with the nations of Southeast Asia already surpasses its trade with the United States.

We strongly welcome these Indian economic partnerships – which complement America's goal of greater regional economic integration. This fall, we finalized our own groundbreaking Free Trade Agreement with Korea. We are hopeful that the rules-based order that we seek to maintain and advance through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Trans-Pacific Partnership will be a cornerstone for the eventual creation of a free trade area of the Asia-Pacific.

The goal of the TPP is to yoke together countries on both sides of the Pacific to create a new gold standard for multilateral free trade, and then to use the promise of access to new markets to encourage nations to raise their standards and join. In pursuing this TPP vision, we recognize that India is working towards similar goals of regional economic connectivity and shared prosperity. We see our efforts to open markets as complementary and converging, and encourage the Indian government to continue its domestic reform agenda to facilitate greater foreign investment and market access in tandem with its regional economic integration efforts. This reform process is good for India, and good for the world. Over time, we look forward to India playing an eventual role in our vision of trans-Pacific economic cooperation.

India is not an APEC member, but its trade relations with APEC nations are growing by leaps and bounds. India is an essential part of our vision for an economically integrated Asia-Pacific region that generates not just more growth, but better growth; strong protections for workers, the environment, intellectual property, and innovation; the free flow of information technology and the spread of green technology; and the efficiency of regional and global supply chains.

We agree with Ambassador Rao's suggestion that our partnership should revolve around the twin principles of shared security and shared prosperity. To which we would add one more: human dignity.

## **V. Advancing Human Dignity Across the Region**

Across the world, I believe that India and America – with so many converging interests, shared values and common concerns – are natural partners in building a more secure, stable, democratic and just global system. India can make a decisive contribution to what Secretary Clinton has called “the global architecture of cooperation” to solve problems that no one country can solve on its own.

Americans look at India and see a pluralistic, multi-party democracy, a place of innovation and openness, a success story that offers hope to societies wracked by political turmoil and sectarian or ethnic divides. In other words, we see a model for the very values we hope will become universal across the Asia-Pacific region. We hope India will recognize the value of helping others match its achievement.

India's synthesis of high economic growth and multiparty democracy could not be more relevant in a region where debates rage about the value of democracy to development. Whether by sharing its unrivaled experience of conducting free elections across a vast human and geographic mosaic; by offering its expertise in the rule of law, e-governance, education and even the English language; or

using the diplomacy and resources of its diaspora to support peace and progress throughout the region – India has so many opportunities to promote human dignity beyond its borders.

Just last month, Hillary Clinton became the first American Secretary of State in over half a century to visit Burma. We have seen significant reforms and we have a strong desire to see them continue. Our two countries have historically approached Burma very differently. But today, we are hopeful that positive steps –advanced by our engagement– present a strong argument to support Burma’s internal reforms and help a country whose people have suffered for far too long. Then-Foreign Secretary Rao’s meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi earlier this year was an important step, and we hope that the Indian government will use its historical friendship and relations with Burma to engage its civil society and continue to encourage concrete action on political and economic reform and national reconciliation.

Enhanced engagement with other countries across the region does not mean that we can’t be forthright in defending and promoting human rights. For example, both the United States and India are stepping up cooperation with Vietnam, an increasingly close partner and an emerging regional leader. Earlier this week I visited Hanoi, where I met with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister and a number of other senior officials, as well as non-governmental leaders. My visit left me deeply impressed by Vietnam’s potential and convinced of the promise of our partnership. As part of this process, we are continuing our dialogue with Vietnam on human rights and we have made it clear to our Vietnamese friends that developing our partnership to its fullest potential, on the basis of mutual interest and mutual respect, also involves practical steps to safeguard universal human rights. We hope India shares similar concerns.

## **VI. Conclusion**

This is an exciting time to be crafting Asia-Pacific policy in either of our countries.

If we get it right, the U.S.-India relationship will be a cornerstone of an Asia-Pacific century, one in which our leaders can build greater peace, security and prosperity in the century ahead, not only for our two countries, but for the region at large. This is not simply the work of advancing our mutual national interests – it is work that will help define the story of the 21st century. The story of how we work together to ensure a peaceful and prosperous international order is as ambitious as it is profound. It is a deeply strategic endeavor that we can and must pursue together. It is work that will define a generation.

This will not occur automatically. We know from history that a strong partnership between us takes hard and sustained effort. But the truth is that our nations have crossed a threshold in our relations where – for both of us, for the first time – our success at home and abroad depends on our work together. America’s vision for the 21st century has at its heart an Asia-Pacific built on security, prosperity and dignity for all nations and people. That vision will be impossible without a strong American partnership with a rising India. In the years ahead, we must extend our already strong partnership to the places where it will matter most. Few challenges will carry greater consequence – for both of us – in the new century unfolding before us. Thank you.

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